

## 12 THE CASTAWAYS OF THE FLAG

He turned to the passenger sitting on the middle bench, near one of the women.

"Mr. Fritz ! " he said.

Fritz Robinson raised his head and bent round,

"What do you want, bo'sun ? " he asked.

"Look over there—towards the east,"

"What do you think you see ? "

"If Pm not mistaken, a kind of rift, like a belt, on the water-line."

Unmistakably there was a lighter line along the horizon in that direction. Sky and sea could be distinguished with more definiteness. It was as if a rent had just been made in the dome of mist and vapour.

"It's wind ! " the boatswain declared,

"Isn't it only the first beginning of daybreak ? "

the passenger asked.

"It might be daylight, though it's very early for it," John Block replied, "and again it might be a breeze 1 I felt something of it in my beard just now, and look!—it's twitching still! Pm aware it's not a breeze to fill the top-gallant sails, but anyhow it's more than we've had for the last four and twenty hours\* Put, your hand to your ear, Mr. Fritz, and listen; you'll hear what I heard,"

"You are right," said the passenger, leaning over the gunwale ; "it is the breeze."

" And we're ready for it," the  
boatswain replied,  
"wth the foresail block and tackle.  
**We've** only